

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION OECD PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH DC IMMEDIATE 0831

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 OECD PARIS 05764

DEPT PASS LABOR FOR SECRETARY USERY, SEGALL AND METCALF

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, OECD

SUBJECT: LABOR MINISTERS' MEETING, MARCH 4-5 :
COMMUNIQUE

REF: STATE 040486

THE FOLLOWING IS THIRD DRAFT OF MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE.
DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT SECRETARIAT ATTEMPTED TO
ACCOMMODATE MUCH OF THE LANGUAGE AND/OR IDEAS PROPOSED
BY US IN REFTEL. HOWEVER, SOME US SUGGESTIONS ARE NOT
REFLECTED.

BEGIN TEXT -

1. THE SERIOUS EMPLOYMENT SITUATION WAS THE CENTRAL
ISSUE AT THE FIRST MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING OF THE OECD
COMMITTEE OF MANPOWER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, WHICH WAS
HELD IN PARIS ON 4TH AND 5TH MARCH UNDER THE CHAIRMAN-
SHIP OF M. MICHEL DURAFOUR, MINISTER OF LABOR OF FRANCE.
THE VICE-CHAIRMEN WERE THE HON. ROBERT K. ANDRAS, P.C.,
M.P., MINISTER OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION, CANADA;
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MR. CONSTANTINOS LASKARIS, MINISTER OF LABOR, GREECE;

AND MR. INGEMUND BENGTTSSON, MINISTER OF LABOR, SWEDEN.

2. MINISTERS REAFFIRMED THE COMMITMENT OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO FULL EMPLOYMENT AS A GOAL OF POLICY, FOR WHICH THE RESTORATION OF ADEQUATE LEVELS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, WITH THE PROGRESSIVE ELIMINATION OF INFLATION, IS THE PRIMARY CONDITION.

3. THEY NOTED THAT, DESPITE THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY NOW BEGINNING IN THE OECD AREA, THE REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IS LIKELY TO BE SLOW BECAUSE IN THE EARLY PHASE OF THE RECOVERY ENTERPRISES WILL FIRST TEND TO USE EXISTING MANPOWER MORE FULLY AND, IN SOME COUNTRIES, BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES.

4. IN THIS SITUATION, MINISTERS STRESSED THAT A SUBSTANTIAL RECOVERY OF EMPLOYMENT WILL DEPEND PRINCIPALLY ON THE EXPANSION OF DEMAND, BUT ALSO ON RELATED SPECIAL ACTIONS BY EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER AUTHORITIES TO STIMULATE THE CREATION OF JOBS AND TO ASSIST WORKERS TO ACQUIRE THE SKILLS AND MOVE INTO THE JOBS NEEDED AS PART OF THE ECONOMIC UPSWING.

5. MINISTERS ACCEPTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A NEED TO DIVERT RESOURCES FROM DEFENSIVE POLICIES SUCH AS INCOME MAINTENANCE TO ABSORB THE SHOCK OF UNEMPLOYMENT TO MORE ACTIVE POLICIES AIMED AT THE PROVISION OF SOCIALLY USEFUL AND ECONOMICALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES TO UNEMPLOYMENT. THEY STRESSED IN PARTICULAR THAT MANPOWER TRAINING COULD HELP THE UNEMPLOYED AND NEW ENTRANTS TO THE LABOR MARKET TO ACQUIRE SKILLS NEEDED TO ENTER EXPANDING SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY. TEMPORARY AND SELECTIVE SUBSIDIES TO ENTERPRISES OR REDUCTIONS OF CHARGES ON THEIR PAYROLLS SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE USED AND TESTED AS A MEANS TO LOWER THE COSTS TO EMPLOYERS OF EXPANDING OR MAINTAINING EMPLOYMENT DURING THE ECONOMIC UPSWING. OTHER POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE JOB-CREATION PROGRAMS IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS, COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS AND INCREASED EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC WORKS. IN ANY POLICY TO ASSIST THE

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UNEMPLOYED, MINISTERS STRESSED THE NEED FOR SPECIAL ACTION TO ENSURE THAT DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GET THEIR FAIR SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

6. LOOKING BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION, MINISTERS AGREED THAT THE CHALLENGE FACING THE OECD COUNTRIES IS NOT ONLY TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AND AVOID RENEWED INFLATION, BUT ALSO TO ACHIEVE FULL EMPLOYMENT IN WAYS

RELEVANT TO EMERGING SOCIAL ASPIRATIONS AND NEW ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. THE ESSENTIAL GOAL SHOULD BE SATISFYING AND SOCIALLY USEFUL CAREERS FOR ALL. THIS WILL INVOLVE POLICIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER AND THE QUALITY OF JOBS, AND TO FACILITATE THE BALANCE BETWEEN WORK, EDUCATION AND LEISURE THAT WILL ASSIST LONG-TERM ADJUSTMENT BETWEEN THE AVAILABILITY OF JOBS AND THE

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SUPPLY OF LABOR, BEARING IN MIND THE NEEDS, ASPIRATIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALL GROUPS IN SOCIETY.

7. TO THIS END, MINISTERS AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE A NEED TO CONSIDER NEW POLICIES IN AREAS SUCH AS: EQUITY IN ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES; A WIDER RANGE OF INTERRELATED EDUCATION AND WORK OPTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE; IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS AND THE CONTEXT OF JOBS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE LESS-SKILLED OCCUPATIONS; TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS, SO AS TO HELP THEM TO FURTHER DEVELOP AS INDI-

VIDUALS AND ADJUST THEIR SKILLS TO ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE; INCREASED FLEXIBILITY OF CAREER, EDUCATIONAL AND RETIREMENT PATTERNS FOR ALL.

8. MINISTERS AGREED THAT THE ABOVE SHORT-TERM AND MEDIUM-TERM GOALS CAN ONLY BE ATTAINED IF THE OECD COUNTRIES HAVE EFFICIENT AND ADAPTABLE ECONOMIES, WITH ADEQUATE RATES OF GROWTH AND EQUITY IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME. THEY AGREED THAT EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER UNCLASSIFIED

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POLICIES CAN MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THIS END BY HELPING TO MODERATE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES, BY RECONCILING EMPLOYMENT SECURITY WITH THE MOBILITY NEEDED TO RESPOND TO NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, AND BY DEVELOPING THE SKILLS NEEDED AS PART OF ECONOMIC GROWTH. CLOSER LINKAGES BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER POLICY AND ALL RELEVANT DOMAINS OF ECONOMIC POLICY ARE THEREFORE NEEDED AS PART OF AN EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY. THE EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER SERVICES OF MEMBER COUNTRIES NEED TO BE STRENGTHENED TO PLAY THEIR CENTRAL ROLE IN SUCH A STRATEGY, BEARING IN MIND VARIATIONS IN THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND IN THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING BETWEEN COUNTRIES.

9. MINISTERS REQUESTED THAT THE OECD SHOULD ASSIST MEMBER COUNTRIES TO MONITOR EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND POOL INFORMATION ON POLICIES ADOPTED TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT, AND INTENSIFY STUDIES OF HOW SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DETERMINATION OF INCOMES CAN HELP TO MODERATE INFLATION.

10. MINISTERS AGREED ON THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION SO AS TO AVOID BEGGAR-THY-NEIGHBOR POLICIES IN THE EMPLOYMENT FIELD. FOR EXAMPLE, MAJOR CHANGES IN MIGRATION FLOWS BETWEEN SOME EUROPEAN MEMBER COUNTRIES CALL FOR INTENSIFIED COOPERATION BETWEEN HOST COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, SO THAT THE BURDEN OF ADJUSTMENT CAN BE MORE EQUITABLY SHARED AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROMOTED.

11. EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER POLICIES MAY HAVE IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN ENABLING OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES TO CONTINUE THE TREND TOWARDS FREER INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT. IN PARTICULAR WORKERS IN INDUSTRIES AFFECTED SHOULD BE ASSISTED TO ADAPT TO STRUCTURAL CHANGES RESULTING FROM CHANGING PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT COUNTRIES.

12. MANPOWER AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES DIRECTLY AFFECT
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THE INTERESTS OF BOTH EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS. MINISTERS
THEREFORE AGREED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTA-
TION OF THESE POLICIES REQUIRE CONTINUING COOPERATION
AND INVOLVEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE BUSINESS AND LABOR
ORGANIZATIONS IN FORMS APPROPRIATE TO EACH COUNTRY'S
INSTITUTIONS.

13. IN ORDER TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE ABOVE CONCLUSIONS
MINISTERS AGREED ON THE ATTACHED OECD RECOMMENDATION
ON A GENERAL EMPLOYMENT AND MANPOWER POLICY, WHICH CALLS
ON MEMBER COUNTRIES TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.
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